

SPORTS

# Five-time MLB top umpire visits Depot after 45 years

CPL. ALISHA R. FITZGERALD  
STAFF WRITER

Three Major League Baseball umpires, including one who is a former Marine, were aboard the Depot Oct. 24 to observe recruit training.

Harry Wendelstedt, retired MLB umpire and founder of the Harry Wendelstedt School for Umpires in Ormond Beach, Fla., Ed Hickox, an American League umpire and director of Central Florida's Umpire Camp in Daytona Beach, Fla., and Paul Nauert, a National League umpire, were in the area to host a two-day clinic for local amateur umpires at the Beaufort Basil Green Complex Saturday - Sunday. The clinic was presented by the South Carolina Recreation and Parks Association.

Wendelstedt has a special tie to Parris Island. He completed recruit training here in 1958 to become a Marine reservist. This was his first trip back in 45 years. He said he was excited about being back and made note of what was different and what had remained the same.

"I went to the Colors Ceremony -- when I heard the Marines' Hymn -- I got goose bumps," said Wendelstedt. "I noticed a lot of physical changes to the base, but one thing that has remained the same is the product that comes out of here -- some of the world's finest military people."

Although he only spent six months on active duty, the Parris

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Island Museum paid homage to Wendelstedt's career by displaying his photo and a plaque on a wall shared by National Baseball Hall of Famers Rod Carew and Roberto Clemente.

Wendelstedt was honored for the recognition he received during his visit.

"I was tickled to death," he said. "It delighted me to be included among the others on the wall. I was also moved by the welcome I received from the commanding general and impressed with his knowledge of baseball. It was probably the nicest honor I've ever received."

After the visit, the MLB umpires turned to their next order of business -- passing on proper officiating techniques to those eager to learn. Forty local amateur umpires, or potential umpires, attended the clinic at Basil Green.

Those who attended the clinic were more than impressed by Wendelstedt's work ethic.

"He's a humble man," said Frank Martin, president of the Beaufort Officials Association. "He's a gentleman and a true professional, and in my opinion, he'll be in the Hall of Fame one day, too. He teaches the fundamentals because he wants every-

body to be the best that they can be. He'll go over the fundamentals for anybody, and it doesn't matter whether you're in Dixie Youth, American Legion or the pros."

Wendelstedt, who retired in 1998 and claims the second-longest MLB umpiring career at 33 years, attributed much of his success to things he learned from his time spent in the Marine Corps.

"Once you've gone through the training, it becomes something that never leaves you," he said.

Wendelstedt spent four terms as the president of the Major League Umpires Association and was named MLB's top umpire five times throughout his career. He also got the opportunity to umpire 35 World Series games, four All-Star games and 13 league championship series during his career. He has umpired five no-hitters behind the plate, including one by pitching great and National Baseball Hall of Famer Bob Gibson, who played with the St. Louis Cardinals from 1959 - 1975, and still holds World Series records for consecutive games won at seven and strikeouts in a game at 17.

"All of those games I consider

treasured moments," said Wendelstedt. "One of the proudest moments in my career would have to be when my son made it into the majors as an umpire. We were the first father-and-son team in the profession, and even got the opportunity to work on the same crew."

Wendelstedt's son, Hunter, also helps him run his umpiring school, which was founded in 1976. It has been called the most prestigious of its kind for professional umpires throughout the world.

"Everyone who qualifies [at the school] gets the opportunity to work in the minors," said Wendelstedt. "They have to work hard to move their way up through the ranks. Only the best make it to the majors."

A lot of the best are formed at Wendelstedt's school. He said that as he was watching the 2003 MLB post season, he noticed that about 80 percent of the umpires working the league championship series and the World Series had attended his school.

Wendelstedt said he is proud of his accomplishments and feels his work is important.

"We contribute a lot to baseball throughout the country by doing what we do," he said.

As an umpire, Wendelstedt said it is impossible to root for one particular team. He was forced to remain impartial throughout his career.

"It's just not reasonable to have a favorite team," he said. "You just can't. It's like cops and robbers. We're there to provide regulations. Despite what anyone



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**Paul Nauert, a National League umpire, explains some of the tricks of the trade to Sgt. Michael Batton, receptionist at the Douglas Visitor Center, while waiting to watch recruits go through the gas chamber at WFTBn. Friday.**

may think, umpires don't lean or have grudges. You have to use common sense and fair play."

Besides running his school every year from Jan. 2 - Feb. 7, Wendelstedt spends his days traveling all over the country,

and even abroad sometimes, to host clinics, like the one held in Beaufort, about 15 times a year.

To find out more about Wendelstedt's school, log on to [www.umpireschool.com](http://www.umpireschool.com) or call (386) 672-4879.



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**Will Cuellar, CVIC's quarterback, weaves out of the grasp of a Weapons defender at the Depot football field Oct. 9. CVIC defeated Weapons 29-6 in the game. After week seven of the season, CVIC sits in second place in the standings with an 8-4 record.**

## Clothing still reigns league as season approaches final phase

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Three weeks remain in the Marine Corps Community Services-South Carolina Intramural Football Season.

As the final phase approaches, Clothing continues to reign at the top of the standings with a 9-1 record.

Clothing and Hospital had remained neck-and-neck throughout the season, up until week seven when Clothing defeated Hospital 19-13 for the second time at the Depot football field Oct. 22.

"The opportunities were there," said Michael Barker, quarterback for Hospital. "We just didn't take advantage of them, and we didn't execute our plays in the end."

The second loss to Clothing seemed to propel Hospital into some sort of slump as the team was beaten by the sixth-place Cyclones 25-6 Monday at the field. The loss moved the team two slots down to fourth place at 6-4.

"We've lost some of our players to personal commitments, school and whatnot," said Barker. "Our other guys are going to have to step up. We need to make some adjustments,

but we'll come around."

Despite the sudden change of status, Barker warned to not count his team out come tournament time.

"Everybody thinks we're not any good any more, but trust me, no team wants to meet us in the playoffs," he said.

CVIC, the only team that has beaten Clothing, took Hospital's spot as the second-place team after wins during week seven, improving their record to 8-4.

CVIC is scheduled to face Clothing again Tuesday. Since their last meeting, Clothing has been anxious to retaliate for the beating it took from the CVIC players, calling the loss a fluke that never should have happened.

"Oh, believe me, it was luck," said Casper Stephens, coach for Clothing and running back. "There's no doubt that we'll beat them this time."

CVIC claimed the win was well deserved. Head coach Ray Glover explained why his team will defeat the top team once again.

"Unless they have changed their game plan, we've got their number," he said. "We just have to remain consistent."

Glover said that a comment by a Clothing player in a past football article has helped fuel his

fire to come after the team with even more force this time.

"What Carlos Roberts said about how nobody in the league could beat them really irritated me," he said. "I plan to read the story again before our next game with them, so I can be efficiently pumped up to take care of business."

As CVIC continues to get more and more recognition as they move up in the standings and tack on more wins, Glover is satisfied that his team is headed in the right direction and looks forward to what lies ahead. He elaborated on some of his secrets to success.

"We've changed our game plan a little bit and our intensity has picked up," he said. "Each of my players has personal pride and contribute something different to the team. Before each game, I'll take each one aside and single out their individual strengths, helping them perform up to the standards I know they're capable of."

Three weeks of regular season play remain before the teams will need to switch into playoff mode. The Dirty Boyz remain in third place at 7-4. Dental is in fifth at 5-4 and the Cyclones are sixth, after a win over the Hospital improved their record to 4-6.